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## **Piecemeal education reforms don't meet Native students needs, according to new report**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM — In-depth report released today by the Tribal Education Alliance (TEA) calls for a dramatic change in course to close the equity gap faced by Native children. The report says that New Mexico's education system is unjust and inequitable, depriving Native children of important educational opportunities.

The TEA is a coalition of tribal education leaders, experts, and advocates, including the Santa Fe Indian School Leadership Institute I and the University of New Mexico Native American Budget and Policy Institute.

"The state has a moral and legal obligation to transform education, which requires a shift in approach, not in rhetoric," said Regis Pecos, Santa Fe Indian School Leadership Institute Co-Director and former Governor of Cochiti Pueblo. "The path we take after the landmark *Yazzie/Martinez* court decision will determine what future generations inherit from us. The struggle for the education of our children is a struggle for the survival of Indigenous cultures, languages, and values. Indian education was built on forced assimilation. Now, following *Yazzie/Martinez*, we must fully and truly end this injustice."

The TEA report, *Pathways to Education Sovereignty: Taking a Stand for Native Children*, presents Indigenous solutions to New Mexico's education crisis. These solutions call on the state to increase tribal control over the education of Native children, invest in community-based education programs and facilities, and provide a balanced, culturally and linguistically relevant education for all. During the 2021 legislative session, a package of bills will be introduced guided by these proposals.

The solutions put forward in the report reflect the recommendations contained in the *Tribal Remedy Framework*, a comprehensive plan for upholding Native students' constitutional right to a sufficient education. That plan was created collectively by tribal community members and Indigenous education experts and supported by the leadership of New Mexico's 23 Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. It is a tribal response to the mandates contained in the 2018 *Yazzie/Martinez* court ruling, which ordered the state to transform the public education system to ensure that at-risk students, including Native students, receive the programs and services necessary to be college and career ready.

"It is important that our public education system raise tribal communities and tribal governments to their rightful place as leaders in Indian education," said Jasmine Yepa, Pueblo of Jemez, Native American Budget and Policy Institute Policy Analyst. "This ideal stands firm in equity. Tribal community members must be leading the way in how Native American students' needs are being met — this is the most effective way of addressing generations of institutional racism and discrimination of Native American students in the public education system."

A summary of *Pathways to Education Sovereignty: Taking a Stand for Native Children* can be found here: [https://nabpi.unm.edu/assets/documents/tea-summary\\_report.pdf](https://nabpi.unm.edu/assets/documents/tea-summary_report.pdf)

The full report can be found here: [https://nabpi.unm.edu/assets/documents/tea-full-report\\_12-14-20.pdf](https://nabpi.unm.edu/assets/documents/tea-full-report_12-14-20.pdf)

The *Tribal Remedy Framework* can be found here: <https://nabpi.unm.edu/tribal-remedy-framework.html>

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*The UNM Native American Budget and Policy Institute empowers Native American communities to improve their health, education, and economic well-being.*